



Missing 31-year-old

May 20th, 1970
Cabazon Peak
1970-008

by Phil Moedt

At 0600 five RMRU members met at the Sheriff's substation in Banning to get the details of a missing person report. Wayne Newkirk, age 31, of Garden Grove had taken Friday the 8th of May off from work and had not been seen since. On Monday the 11th of May his car had been found just South of Cabazon at the base of the old road leading South to Twin Pines Ranch. Helicopter searches by the Sheriff's Dept. during the subsequent week had turned up no clues. The team was shown photos of the individual and told that mental and personal problems might be possible factors in his disappearance. Several vehicles were used to then transport the team to the location where the car had been found.

The team proceeded up the old road on foot to a location about 3/4ths of a mile north of the Twin Pines Ranch and an elevation of 3200 feet. No trace of the missing person was found en route. At this point (time: 0830) the team was split into two units. Each was to proceed in a northerly direction along one of two canyons located on either side of the road we had just come up. Walt Walker and Bill Speck searched the one lying about 1/2 mile east of the road. While Ed Hill, Steve Bryant and I took the canyon to the west. The west canyon was very steep and rugged at first but soon became a series of level areas interspersed with cascades and waterfalls. At an elevation of about 2700 feet at the bottom of a waterfall area a footprint was found. Ed took the east ridge to get a better view of the canyon while Steve and I stayed in the creek area tracking footprints. About 1015 at a location just above a water gauging station Ed spotted something about 50 yards ahead on a rock. Steve and I proceeded quickly to the location. Just as we got the object Ed had seen into view we were startled by a haggard person moving out from under a tree and standing to greet us. We immediately recognized him as the missing person. His condition was very good except for sunburned hands and face. He had entered the area dressed in a suit carrying only an electric shaver, men's accessory box, and a notebook containing some of his notes from work. The only food he had taken with him was six or seven "Space Sticks"; these apparently lasted only a couple days. He had eaten no food during the next 10 days; however, plenty of water from the stream was available.

He was at first reluctant to go out of the area with us because of a fear that the wrong people would pick him up. We did not delve into the reasons of his concern but merely pointed out to him that his father was worried about him and that he could telephone him as soon as we got out. At this point he decided that it would be best to go out with us. After cleaning his feet of sand, putting on a pair of Ed's socks, and then his shoes we

slowly hiked directly east towards the old road. After a couple of encounters with "busstails" while in the high grass we were glad to reach the old road after only a third of a mile hike. We slowly made our way down the remaining mile and a half of road towards Cabazon. Walt and Bill, having been down for quite some time, and Tom Dadson who had just arrived, were out in the San Gorgonio River wash looking for tracks when we let them know we were on the road heading down. We arrived at our vehicles just before noon.

We took Wayne back to the Banning substation where subsequent questioning revealed that by mental telepathy he had been directed to the location where we found him so that he could be picked up by a space ship. He felt that the difficult terrain had prevented the spaceship from landing. He was then taken to the hospital for treatment of exposure and to obtain specially prepared food required by a person having gone such a length of time without food.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.